



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Instruction Memorandum No. FA IM-2016-004
Expires: 09/30/2016

To: State and Center Directors

From: Assistant Director, Fire and Aviation

Subject: Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Guidance for the Department of the Interior (DOI) Medical Standards Program (MSP) Process for 2016

Program Area: Fire and Aviation Management

Purpose: This instruction memorandum (IM) provides BLM-specific direction for employee participation in the DOI MSP and medical clearance process for 2016.

This IM also augments BLM policy direction for the work capacity test (WCT) found in the 2015 *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*, chapters 2 and 13.

Policy/Action: The DOI MSP, utilizing Comprehensive Health Services (CHS), implemented Phase I in 2015 which included Nevada and Oregon/Washington. Phase II will include all arduous duty qualified personnel in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho and Montana for 2016. **The process for administratively determined/emergency firefighter (AD/EFF) employees is described below.**

Phase I and Phase II employees in the following categories will participate in the DOI MSP and medical clearance process when required as a condition of hire, or prior to participating in the arduous WCT:

- All new permanent employees (permanent full-time, career-seasonal, term and Pathways interns);
- All incumbent permanent employees (permanent full-time, career-seasonal, term and Pathways interns);

- All temporary employees

All Phase I and Phase II arduous personnel are required to take a medical exam through CHS and medically qualify under the Federal Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards prior to appointment. Once hired, medical qualification becomes a condition of employment and an exam is performed every three years. Current periodicity for Phase II employees will start over when phasing into the contracted exam process.

For detailed information on the DOI MSP Phase II guidance, please visit:
http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards.

Administratively Determined/Emergency Firefighters

All AD/EFF firefighters will fill out the health screen questionnaire (HSQ). If they answer yes to any questions on the HSQ, they must have a DOI MSP annual exam (printable on the DOI MSP website) completed by a licensed physician, nurse practitioner or physician's assistant. Alaska AD/EFFs marking yes to any questions on the HSQ should coordinate with the unit fire management officer (FMO) to schedule an exam.

Additional Direction for Phase I employees (Nevada, Oregon/Washington):

All arduous personnel who completed a CHS exam in 2015 and received a Medically Qualified or Qualified with Risk Mitigation Waiver determination must complete the DOI MSP self-certification process prior to taking the WCT in 2016. The self-certification process will be available through the CHS Employee Access System (EAS) beginning **9/30/2015**.

The Employee Access System will notify the employee and the original exam requestor that the employee is due for self-certification 60, 30 and 15 days prior to the exam anniversary. Results of completed self-certifications will be printable through EAS and should be used as verification of medical qualification at the WCT. Self-certification results will also be viewable by management in the CHS Client Access System (CAS).

Exam Process for States Not Participating in Phase I or Phase II:

States not included in Phase I or Phase II will continue to utilize the same process used in 2015. If an employee has not had an exam in the past three years one will need to be completed. If an exam has been completed in the previous three years, then an HSQ will be completed. All ADs will complete an HSQ. Any employee who answers yes on the HSQ will be required to take the DOI MSP annual exam. Employees needing an exam should print the exam package from the DOI MSP website and have it completed by a licensed physician, nurse practitioner or physician's assistant. All completed forms will be returned to the Servicing Human Resources Officer (SHRO). (All AD/EFF records will be kept with the local hiring unit FMO or SHRO.)

Firefighters who are given a determination of cleared will also provide a copy of the DOI MSP annual exam packet clearance determination page to their supervisor or FMO.

Additional information can be found at the DOI MSP website:
http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards/index.html.

Risk Mitigation/Waiver Process:

The risk mitigation/waiver process is available for applicants not meeting one or more of the Federal Interagency Wildland Firefighter Medical Standards. Regardless of exam type, if the determination is “not cleared,” the SHRO will contact the DOI MSP Customer Service Office to initiate the risk mitigation/waiver process. Existing waivers or waivers with restrictions remain valid unless there is a change in medical condition. For detailed information on the DOI MSP, the risk mitigation/waiver process and Phase II guidance please visit: http://www.nifc.gov/medical_standards.

Employees may submit additional medical information to the reviewing medical officer (RMO) for further evaluation any time by contacting the DOI MSP Customer Service Office.

Reviewing Medical Officer (RMO) Review:

All exams are subject to medical review by the DOI MSP, which could potentially change the examinee’s clearance. Reviews are generally for employees that have short-term medical conditions and can provide information from their primary physician or specialist that clearly shows the condition has been resolved and the employee is able to resume arduous duty without limitations.

If an FMO or SHRO has concerns about the results of any DOI MSP exam, an RMO review should be requested through the DOI MSP.

Exam payment:

All costs of Phase I and Phase II exams are centrally-funded by the Fire and Aviation Directorate. Firefighters should not pay for or be billed for CHS exams.

For employees not included in Phase I or Phase II, the preferred method of obtaining medical exam services is through the utilization of local unit blanket purchase agreements (BPAs) with local medical clinics. If this is not an option, other payment methods may be established by the local unit.

The government estimate for the non-CHS exam is \$185. The exam cost should be negotiated with the clinic by whoever is scheduling the exam, or by the contracting officer who establishes the BPA. Non-CHS exam costs will be paid for by Fire and Aviation using the following code:

LLFA401000 LF1000000.HT0000 LXSS005R0000 (16X)

Timeframe: Effective immediately.

Budget Impact: None.

Background: Agency administrators and supervisors are responsible for the occupational health and safety of their employees performing wildland fire activities, and may require employees to take a medical examination at any time. Established medical qualification programs, as stated in

5 Code of Federal Regulation 39, provide consistent medical standards in order to safeguard the health of employees whose work may subject them or others to significant health and safety risks due to occupational or environmental exposure or demand.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*, chapters 2 and 13.

Coordination: This IM has been coordinated by the Division of Fire Operations and Safety, the Fire and Aviation Human Resources Officer, and the Fire and Aviation Equal Employment Opportunity Manager.

Contact: Specific exam questions should be directed to the DOI MSP customer service representatives, 1-888-286-2521, or wlfcsr@blm.gov.

Other program questions should be directed to Shelby Gales, acting BLM Fire Safety Program Manager, 503-828-8156, sgales@blm.gov

Human Resources or SHRO questions should be directed to Kip Stover, Human Resources Branch Chief (acting), Fire and Aviation, 208-387-5514, or kstover@blm.gov.

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